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Providing for Superior Students
in Ninth Grade English

By MAURINE SELF
CHICAGO

"Have I done everything that I could do to help each student in my classes utilize his abilities and grow to the greatest extent possible?" This is a question which, I feel sure, plagues the mind of every conscientious teacher at the end of each school year. With accusations on every hand that the superior students in our schools have become the "neglected" and the "underprivileged" group, we have become especially introspective and critical of our own dealings with this group. "What more *could* I have done for my superior students?" we ask ourselves.

In the past thirty years much has been done to dispel some mistaken ideas concerning the gifted. Professor Witty says, "Prior to 1920 it was believed by many persons that very bright and 'gifted' children were atypical, immature, and emotionally unstable. Some writers asserted that eccentricity and genius were inseparable, and others stated that the extent of genius was in direct proportion to the amount of instability. The stereotype of the 'genius'

Miss Self, who teaches in Jacksonville High School and is district leader of the South Central Division of the Association, believes that the English program is exceedingly adaptable to meeting the individual differences of our students. She illustrates her thesis in this stimulating paper by referring to her experiences on the ninth grade level.

and the gifted child persists to this day in the thinking of many people."¹

The Stanford study of gifted children, begun in 1921 and continued to the present, has had far-reaching influence on our thinking. Lewis M. Terman and others found that "the typical gifted child is superior not only in intelligence but in practically all the traits that were studied, including school achievement, versatility, character traits, play information, social adjustment, and physique."²

Definition of the Gifted

People do not agree on the definition of the gifted. In the Terman study subjects chosen rated within the highest one per cent in general intelligence as measured by the tests used. Binet-tested subjects were required to have 140 IQ and high school subjects tested by the Terman Group Test were required to have 135 IQ.³

In Professor Hollingworth's first experiments two Special Opportunity classes were formed at Public School 165 in New York City. Group A was made up of twenty-six children with IQ's (S-B) from 150 up and Group B with IQ's (S-B) from 134 to 154 with age range between 7½ and 9½ years. In her second experiment at Speyer School "the median IQ for the group during the five-year period varied from 140 to 144 because of additions and withdrawals from the classes."⁴

Professor Hollingworth felt that children who test at 180 IQ (S-B) should be called "potential geniuses"; that the term "genius" be applied only to those who in later years have earned the name by outstanding achievement.⁵

Perhaps the definition of the gifted formulated by the Educational Policies Commission in the pamphlet called *Education of the Gifted*, published in 1950, may safely be taken as a generally accepted one. "In this statement the term 'highly gifted' is used to

¹ Paul A. Witty and Samuel W. Bloom, "The Education of the Superior High School Student," *The Bulletin of the Association of Secondary-School Principals*, January 1955, pp. 15-16.

² Lewis M. Terman and Melita H. Oden, "The Stanford Studies of the Gifted," *The Gifted Child*, edited by Paul A. Witty. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951, p. 45.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴ Miriam C. Pritchard, "The Contributions of Leta S. Hollingworth to the Study of Gifted Children," *The Gifted Child*, edited by Paul A. Witty. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951, p. 60.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 72.

designate those who are in the top one per cent of the total population with respect to intellectual capacity (that is, roughly, individuals with an IQ above 137). Similarly the term 'moderately gifted' will apply to individuals who fall within the top ten per cent but below the top one per cent (that is, between 120 and 137 IQ)."⁶ In other words, pupils with IQ's above 120 are considered superior.

Methods of Identification

Most authorities recommend the use of intelligence tests, both group and individual, as the best means of locating the gifted. One important source says, "While current tests of general intelligence will not pick out all the mentally gifted children in any group, these tests are probably the most effective single instrument now available for selecting such children."⁷ Among other methods advocated to supplement the use of the general intelligence test score are: (1) aptitude tests for special gifts in such areas as music, art, mechanics, or language ability; (2) reading scores; (3) teacher appraisal; (4) cumulative school records; and (5) parental observations.

Characteristics of the Gifted

What is the gifted student like—physically, mentally, and personally? Studies show that "intellectually superior children tend to be taller and heavier, healthier and more energetic than intellectually average children of the same age. The intellectually superior children also tend to be superior in motor ability—this again contrary to the widely held stereotype that the intellectually superior child is physically 'awkward.'"⁸

Mental traits of the gifted, as shown by various studies, include: (1) high verbal comprehension, (2) superior vocabulary, (3) intellectual curiosity and imagination, (4) the ability to assimilate and generalize, (5) persistency, (6) insight into problems, (7) broad attention-span, (8) ability to do abstract thinking, (9) originality and creative ability, (10) ability to learn rapidly

⁶ National Education Association of the United States and the American Association of School Administrators, Educational Policies Commission, *Education of the Gifted*. Washington, D. C., The Association, 1950, p. 43.

⁷ William H. Bristow, Marjorie L. Craig, Grace T. Hallock, S. R. Laycock, "Identifying Gifted Children," *The Gifted Child*, edited by Paul A. Witty. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951, p. 14.

⁸ Jacob W. Getzels, "Distinctive Characteristics," *Supplementary Educational Monographs*, No. 81, December 1954, p. 18.

with little repetitive drill, (11) active curiosity and desire to know.⁹

What kind of person is the mentally superior child? Here is a summary of character traits of superior children as listed by one authority:

- "1) They are more often leaders than are pupils of average mental ability
- 2) They make good social adjustments
- 3) They are inclined to prefer association with persons of their own mental level or with those older than they are
- 4) They are extremely sensitive to injustice to others and suffer keenly because of social conditions in the world."¹⁰

Terman found these traits among gifted children, "As compared with unselected children they are less inclined to boast or to overstate their knowledge; they are more trustworthy when under temptation to cheat; their character preferences and social attitudes are more wholesome; and they score higher in a test of emotional stability. On total score of the character tests, the typical gifted child of 9 years tests as high as the average child of 12 or 13."¹¹

Methods of Providing for the Gifted

What are the practices in schools today to provide for superior students? Educators everywhere are puzzled to know how to give special attention to the gifted. Here is a brief review of present practices.

I. Acceleration.

This term may mean grade-skipping in elementary school, course-skipping in high school, or a course that is speeded up so that a child does three years in two.

II. Special Grouping.

- A. Some large cities have special schools for the gifted.
- B. Then there is special sectioning within a school. This may be done by setting an arbitrary standard or by following curriculum patterns, such as college entrance, general, and vocational.

⁹ Getzels, *op. cit.*, p. 21. Witty and Bloom, *op. cit.*, p. 16. California State Committee on Developmental Reading, "Teaching Reading for the Gifted in Secondary Schools," *The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals*, Vol. 39, October 1955, p. 10.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹¹ Terman and Oden, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

- C. Some schools offer advanced classes for the gifted--courses which are college-freshman level. When the student enters college, he takes an examination on the work covered and is given advanced standing in college.¹²
- D. Some schools provide seminars or honors groups which meet only once or twice a week and may carry no extra credit.
- E. Elective courses in English may be thought of as a kind of special grouping; for example, "The Science of Grammar," "Creative Writing," "World Literature," "Journalism," and the like.

III. Enrichment.

This term means extending the school program to meet the special needs of the gifted child. It can mean enriching the program in the heterogeneous classroom or in the homogeneous classroom. By and large, there seems to be a more favorable attitude toward this practice than toward any other.

Needs of the Gifted in English

In planning specific suggestions for enrichment for superior students in English classes, it may be helpful to have a list of needs of the gifted which can be met especially in the English class. These needs may well serve as guiding principles for planning for superior students in any high school English program.

1. Opportunity for personal-social development through experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening.
2. Opportunity for much creative writing.
3. Opportunity for leadership training.
4. Opportunity to work independently.
5. Opportunity to read widely, as well as to pursue special interests in reading.
6. Help in mastering higher reading skills--detecting propaganda, using knowledge of general semantics, generalizing, reflecting, evaluating, etc.
7. Help in appreciating literature as art--understanding symbolism, looking for deeper meanings, appreciating the peculiar values of different forms of literature, etc.

¹² *Guiding Your Gifted*, A Handbook for Teachers, Administrators and Parents. The Educational Service Bureau, School of Education, University of Pennsylvania, 1954, p. 58.

8. Help in developing skills of investigation—knowing library tools, selecting materials, note-taking, reading to solve problems, etc.
9. Help in developing “discipline” in writing skills—clarity of expression, variety in sentence style, the use of the exact word, understanding of grammar for critical analysis of own writing, etc.

Specific Suggestions for Ninth Grade English

At Jacksonville High School the following units are taught in ninth grade English: (1) Getting Acquainted, (2) Taking Inventory of Our Study Skills, (3) Building Personality, (4) Living Together in the Family, (5) Living Together at Work, (6) Living Together at Play, (7) Things That Count, (8) Knowing All Kinds of People. Our classes are heterogeneous except for the very lowest in reading ability, who are put in special classes. Each unit is made up of integrated experiences in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Each unit has some broad objectives for personal-social development and some specific objectives in communications skills.

The suggestions for superior students which will be outlined in the following pages are intended to be enrichment experiences within the framework of some of the units listed above. They are actually only a sampling of what it is possible to do. They do not constitute a complete program for the ninth grade.

Getting Acquainted

The unit “Getting Acquainted” has for its objective helping the freshmen to get acquainted with fellow-students, the teacher, the school, and certain study aids, such as the school library and the dictionary in particular. It obviously is a time for the teacher to learn to know each student as an individual.

Diagnostic tests, including two group intelligence tests and a group reading test, are administered in the opening weeks of school. In addition to these helpful yardsticks, the teacher may devise diagnostic tests of her own. She may use materials in literature textbooks to measure the various reading skills—finding main ideas, noting details, using context clues for new words, using the table of contents and index, using word-analysis clues, and the like. A class chart can be most useful for showing individual needs. Put students’ names on horizontal lines and skills which have been tested on vertical lines. No check means “no difficulty”; one check means “having difficulty”; two checks mean “having

extreme difficulty." Superior students may sometimes be found to be deficient in some specific skill.¹³

In the introduction to the dictionary as a study aid, superior students may omit some of the usual drill and may be permitted to do some special assignments. Let them report on some words with interesting histories, for the superior child is known to have a special interest in origins. Let them compare an unabridged and an abridged dictionary and report to the class concerning the greater resources of the unabridged dictionary. Let them compare several abridged dictionaries to show the class the relative merits of each. Remember that superior students have a greater curiosity than their less-gifted classmates and that they need much opportunity for developing the skills of investigation.

In our school all freshman classes go to the school library for a series of lessons in getting acquainted with the more important library tools. The librarian teaches these lessons with the classroom teacher assisting. Students are given problems to test their newly-acquired information. Superior students may be given more difficult problems in the use of the card catalog, the *Readers' Guide*, and encyclopedias.

Immediately following their library lessons the freshmen begin a free-reading program which continues throughout their four years of English. Students may be encouraged to plan their own program of reading. They may use booklists such as *Your Reading* and *Books for You*, published by the National Council of Teachers of English, and *Books We Like*, published by the Illinois Association of Teachers of English. The teacher may furnish a list of classics suitable for ninth grade students. This may be aimed especially at the superior reader. Students can use their new knowledge of the card catalog to locate the books they wish to read. Perhaps some students will go to the public library for books which they cannot secure in their school library. If the teacher can have in the classroom a small collection of good books in paper-back editions, some students may be stimulated to start a library of their own.

Taking Inventory of Our Study Habits

As the title indicates, "Taking Inventory of Our Study Habits" aims to improve study skills. An informal discussion of the study

¹³ This suggestion and many other helpful ones may be found in: Olive S. Niles and Margaret J. Early, "Adjusting to Individual Differences in English," *Journal of Education*, Vol. 138, December 1955, p. 9.

problems of the class introduces the unit. Each student is asked to write down his own study problems, not signing his name to his paper. These problems are used as material for a panel discussion. The teacher may choose superior students to be members of this panel, the first one of the year. Superior students *should* have the best solutions for their classmates' problems and *should* make a perfect group to attempt the first panel discussion of the year.

In this unit we stress the importance of improving our skills in the three areas in which we learn—reading, listening, and observing. Reading lessons are planned to point up specific reading skills, such as finding main ideas, finding supporting details, visualizing, and the like. This is a logical time to teach some helpful study-devices such as outlining, note-taking, and writing summaries. In teaching these devices the teacher may use selections of varying difficulty, assigning the most difficult selection to the superior students.

To introduce lessons in improving listening, the teacher may give a standardized test in listening.¹⁴ It is also possible to devise one's own tests in listening. The teacher may read materials to the class, or she may tape-record the materials she wishes to use. Superior students may be asked to do the reading. Here are examples of skills one may test for: (1) listen for the main idea; (2) listen to list details; (3) listen to make an outline; (4) listen to take notes; (5) listen to make inferences or to generalize.

The improvement of observation may be taught simultaneously with the writing of one-paragraph themes. Students may be asked to write descriptions of scenes around school—in the assembly, at a football game, in the cafeteria, in the library, in a particular classroom. Here one would teach the topic sentence, the arrangement of sentences in the paragraph, and the single impression toward which the entire paragraph aims.

We should constantly stress creative writing for the superior child. We should give him free rein to use his originality and to develop spontaneity in his writing. We should also remember that the superior child is more capable of understanding grammar than his less capable classmates. He is more capable of using grammar for the critical analysis of his own writing. To encourage good writing we can offer as incentives the publication of the best

¹⁴ See *Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test*, Range: Grades 9-13. Time: 50 minutes. Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Company, 1953.

student writing in the school newspaper, in a school publication of the best writing, in the city newspaper, and in the annual issues of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. We can encourage students to enter contests such as those sponsored by *Scholastic* and *Atlantic* magazines.

Building Personality

The broad objectives of the unit called "Building Personality" are to help the student toward a greater understanding of himself and others, to emphasize the importance of good character in building a personality, and to help him move toward the goal of maturity. The core reading of this unit consists of groups of short stories, each group chosen to emphasize an important factor in building personality. "A Spark Neglected" by Leo Tolstoy, "The Night of the Storm" by Zona Gale, "The Interlopers" by H. H. Munro, and "Antidote for Hatred" by Ann Morse show the power of love and the dangers of hate in one's life. "The Outsider" by Brooke Hanlon, "Judge" by Walter D. Edmonds, "Weep No More, My Lady" by James Street, and "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant help to show the meaning of maturity and ways in which we reach maturity.

Superior students may be asked to read some novels which deal with these same themes. They may be asked to give talks to the class comparing the manner in which the theme was handled in the novel with the way in which it was handled in the short story. Here also is an opportunity for the teacher to help superior students to some appreciation of the comparative values of the short story and the novel as art forms.

At the end of this unit when the entire class reads Dickens' *Great Expectations*, many enrichment activities for superior students suggest themselves. Students may read other novels of Dickens and report them to the class. They may report on Dickens' characters as caricatures and on Dickens as a social reformer. This is another opportune time to encourage superior readers to attempt some of the classics from the list which was mentioned earlier.

Living Together at Play

In the unit "Living Together at Play" we ask each student to choose a project from a long list of suggestions. Projects are grouped in these categories of leisure-time activities: music, art, radio, television, movies, comics, sports, travel, nature study, and hobbies. Superior students may be encouraged to choose projects

which require more extensive research. Here is a list of possibilities:

1. Give a report on magazine articles for and against the comics.
2. Make a comparison of a book known as a classic and the corresponding comic book.
3. Report on critical reviews of current movies found in periodicals.
4. Compare a recent movie and the corresponding book.
5. After examining critical reviews of movies, compile criteria for evaluating movies.
6. Report on the good and bad in television drama.
7. Present a report on the relative values of reading and television.
8. Read all you can and report on some special interest in nature study: birds, trees, shells, insects, whales, etc.
9. Give a demonstration talk about your hobby.
10. Give a talk on your favorite masterpieces of art.

It is easy to see some of the values of this unit. It is ideal for providing for the students' individual differences in both interests and abilities. We attempt to help students to become more discriminating users of the mass media of communication. We hope to show students the endless possibilities for worthwhile leisure-time activities. Finally, the unit provides excellent opportunity for developing the skills of research and oral communication.

Things That Count

In the unit "Things That Count" the chief aim is to emphasize some of the important values in life and to try to combat the materialism of the present day. As a means of launching the unit, students write a theme on "What I Value Most" or "If I Had Three Wishes." Students are asked to search books of poetry in the room for poems which show what things are important to the poets. The following poems may be presented to the class for study: "The Great Lover" (Rupert Brooke), "A Coin" (Emily Dickinson), "There Is No Frigate Like a Book" (Emily Dickinson), "The World Is Too Much with Us" (William Wordsworth), "Ellis Park" (Helen Hoyt), "Barter" (Sara Teasdale), "Loveliest of Trees" (A. E. Housman), and "John Anderson My Jo, John" (Robert Burns).

Since these poems are all lyric, we introduce students to the distinguishing qualities of the lyric poem. Superior students can attain more of what we call "appreciation" of literature than other students can. Perhaps many of them will want to try writing some poetry, putting some of their own ideas of "things that count" into lyric form.

From this beginning with lyric poetry, we proceed to narrative poetry. We include a number of the old ballads and some well-known poems such as Poe's "The Raven," Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and selections from the *Odyssey*. Superior students can bring in many stories from mythology. Some very able student may make a comparison of different translations of the *Odyssey*. The class will be reminded of other great stories of the sea, and several students may read and review for the class some of these books: *Treasure Island* (Stevenson), *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (Jules Verne), *Mutiny on the Bounty* (Nordhoff and Hall), *Kon-Tiki* (Heyerdahl), *The Sea Around Us* (Rachel Carson).

These suggestions for superior students are proof that the high school program in English is amazingly adaptable to meeting the individual differences of our students. With its vast opportunity for training young people in the art of thinking and the powers of expression, English has unique contributions to offer for the education of our gifted students. English has for its special province the key to the great thinking of the past and present—literature. Teachers of English *have* the power needed to challenge the superior learner. With her own resourcefulness and imagination each teacher of English *will* chart the way.

The Role of Literature Today

By CHARLOTTE WHITTAKER

With Dorothy Thompson deploring the passing of the McGuffey readers, and the man on the street or in the bar being prodded to worry about methods of teaching reading, I approach with temerity the attempt to keynote in a few minutes a platform for the Illinois teachers of literature.

For me the role of literature has remained constant; it is the same for today's world as it was for the world of the depressed thirties or for the flaming twenties when some of us read unbound sheets of Joyce's *Ulysses*, smuggled into the country, or admired Mencken and Fitzgerald in the dormitories and listened to our professors extoll the good Tennyson and the noble Browning in the classroom.

You are familiar with William Faulkner's Nobel Prize award speech of 1950, in which he says that the poet or writer's duty is:

"to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not be merely a record of man," says Faulkner; "it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."

Perhaps, as Thornton Wilder points out, we are enduring and prevailing only by "the skin of our teeth." Nevertheless, I believe, with Faulkner, that the essence of the role of literature is to help us endure and prevail; to give us examples of courage and compassion as directives for our lives.

I need not describe for you the world of today, a world which Sean O'Casey calls "weird and wonderful"—yet a world in which he believes man can and must find his own answers. In "Sunset and Evening Star," the final volume of *Mirror of My World*, O'Casey says:

"In the voice of many speaking, in the whirl of the world's changing, the *word* is heard; and the whirl of the world's

"*The Role of Literature Today*" was presented as a talk before the Illinois Association of Teachers of English in Urbana. Mrs. Whittaker is a teacher in Evanston Township High School and the district leader of Lake Shore District of the Association.

changing is the *word*, and the noise of men is the *word* growing louder."

It is in this weird and wonderful world that we work. Our students live in the whirl of the world's changing, and we labor in the midst of the noise of men growing louder. We cannot gather a few eager disciples to sit at our feet. We work with the many, competing for their interest, their time—competing with the world outside the school and the world in the school.

Each young person is seeking self-realization, asking: Who am I? Where can I find security and affection? What will *my* world be? The noise of men advising him grows louder—his counselors, his parents, his ministers, the radio commentators, the television speakers, the advertisers—all these are telling him: *Do this, do this, do this*—and you will be rich and well-liked; you will reach the goals of our world—success and popularity.

What are we, teachers of English, telling him? Are we only saying: Read faster, memorize vocabulary, pass your tests, put the commas in, write a paper on your choice of a career?

None of us can give the young a map for their world, for who knows what their world will be? We do not know what it means to live in the teen-agers' world as it is now: in this world of constant recorded music, of greater conformity to peer standards, of openly expressed opinions and resentments, of increased tempo and increased gratification of impulses. Sometimes we cannot even communicate with the inhabitants of this world. Sometimes our subject matter fails to get through the "rock and roll" curtain. Yet we must try to communicate.

I believe we come closest to intelligent guidance when we help our students develop an understanding of and a genuine interest in great literature. It has been said that reading a mediocre book makes one say: "This is the way I feel." Reading a great book makes one say: "I never knew how I felt. After this experience, I'll never feel the same." Experiences with vital, absorbing literature will help the teen-ager to understand that other men have shared his sense of bewilderment and his sense of wonder at this amazing world. Class discussions of the ideas of books will help students to gain an insight into their own philosophies, prejudices, and problems. We, too, will know them better. On the common ground of sharing interests in books we can become friends with whom problems can be discussed, sometimes in an indirect way.

The record of man's courage, honor, compassion, pity, and sacrifice can be communicated through the study of classics:

Cyrano de Bergerac's bravado, his sentiment, his devotion still have power to move today's youth. But courage for today can also be communicated through modern books. Anne Frank, a perceptive teen-ager, with emotions, with resentments against adults, but with courage and faith in the goodness of people even when she lives in hiding and faces death, is convincing to ninth and tenth-graders. They share her feelings; they will write eagerly about Anne and Peter, Mrs. Van Daam, the pill-taking dentist, and all the tensions of people thrown together in hiding. They can read *The Diary of A Young Girl* and then use the play, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, for oral interpretation, giving cuttings of the play for their own class or for other classes.

To discover the world he lives in, the young person needs to know what men fear. Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* depicts the struggle for existence; the fear of economic insecurity. Ma Joad epitomizes the strength and courage that sustained the family; Casy is an idealized but credible symbol of compassion and pity and self-sacrifice. Ma Joad, Tom, Casy, and Rose of Sharon—all these have the virtues Faulkner mentions; and Steinbeck is saying that those who have these virtues will endure.

"The Country of the Blind," H. G. Wells' allegorical story, shows what men fear in the realm of the mind. The refusal of Numez, the hero, to remain in the country of the blind can be discussed as a possible directive in our own struggle for freedom of thought and speech.

The Death of a Salesman speaks to young people because it discusses the world he is being advised to compete in—the practical-minded world of success and popularity. The fear that Willy Loman has as he faces the reality of his own failures and those of his sons is urgent and convincing; this play speaks to both the superior student and to the reluctant reader. When the books were distributed to my seniors, Arthur Miller was identified as the husband of Marilyn Monroe—my seniors are no different from the London public! After we had read, discussed, and written on the themes and ideas and the method of staging, our emotions were stirred as we listened to the recordings of the play. We felt compassion for Willy Loman who never knew who he was.

How can we use the voice of many speaking and the whirl of the world's changing to serve our purposes? We can use the help of television. A recent performance of Maxwell Anderson's *Key Largo* was a dramatic presentation of the theme that if a man will not die for his beliefs, soon he will have no beliefs. Siobhan

McKenna in *The Letter*, Claude Raines in *Antigone*, and Maurice Evans in Shakespeare's plays all contribute to our cause. If an unperformed play is like an unplayed symphony, perhaps a high moment in the television theater is the *best* way to present dramatic literature to the great crowd of teen-agers.

Let's make use of the spectacular panorama of the movie *War and Peace* to stimulate the reading of Tolstoy's classic. The abridged pocketbook edition I ordered for my seniors was snatched up by avid readers among the sophomores. Not every student, not even every senior student, can read or wants to read *War and Peace*, but our talented can. Others can learn something of it from class presentations and discussions. In a heterogeneous class one group may be reading *War and Peace* while other groups are reading *Hiroshima* or *The Bridges of Toko Ri*. Students who see only the picture will catch something of Tolstoy's attitudes toward war, and his theme that love of life and of one's fellowmen is love of God. Planning with students and providing opportunities for students to choose, in the words of one of my sophomores, removes the stigma from *having to read* classics.

Because of television, today's young people are aware of the theater as no previous crowd of students have been. During a Shaw centennial all of our classes can enjoy something of Shaw. *St. Joan* has been publicized by the New York presentation and also by the selection of a teen-ager, Jean Seberg of Marshalltown, Iowa, as Joan in the motion picture. Seniors can enjoy Shaw's preface as much as the play. A comparison of Mark Twain's, Maxwell Anderson's, and Shaw's Joans can form a research topic for a talented senior. The records of *My Fair Lady* lead naturally to the reading of *Pygmalion*. *Major Barbara* is also suitable for class discussion. Maurice Evans' performance of *Man and Superman* is a further invitation to Shaw. Likewise, other modern books such as *Cry the Beloved Country* can be promoted by the use of the records "Lost in the Stars," by the motion picture, and by oral interpretation of the verse drama.

Literature must continue to play the leading role in our English classes. We must do depth reading that is creative, not passive. We must talk, argue, interpret what the author is saying to us, and ask whether, as Nora says in *A Doll's House*, it is true *for us*. We must interpret orally: the teachers, the students must read aloud; we can even listen to Dylan Thomas reading his poetry on records. We must write our ideas developed through reading. Literature, writing, and speaking must play the leading roles in

our classroom. The supporting roles are to be played by studying vocabulary, practicing skills in mechanics, and developing study techniques. The comic roles will still be played by the extras—photograph taking, drivers' education, and other activities shoved into the English class because everybody takes English.

Only if *we* make the great literature come alive will it reach many of today's youth; they can read the career novels and the junior novels without us—on their own. These books have their place for special purposes, but *our* emphasis must be on the great.

In a recent issue of *The Reporter*, Saroyan suggested that we may come to read our literature on the television screen, in print unrolling like a scroll. At what speed will this mechanism be set? Only with the printed page are we in command of the art form. The great reader is a compulsive reader, sometimes reading as an antidote to the mediocrity of his daily living. The great reader sets his own pace, chooses his own literature, and rereads according to his self-realization at a particular time. *We* are great readers. Let us help our students to become readers of literature, of courage and compassion—let us help them build into their lives pillars to help them endure and prevail.

Program for the Annual Meeting of the IATE, October 11 and 12, 1957, Union Building, University of Illinois, Urbana

THEME

"Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"

—LEWIS CARROLL

Friday, October 11, 1957

9:00 A.M.—Meeting of Executive Council of IATE

1:00 P.M.—Registration

GENERAL SESSION

1:30–2:00 P.M.—Annual Business Meeting—IATE

2:00–2:15 P.M.—“The Teaching of English in Illinois”

(A report from the English Committee of the Allerton House Conferences on Education)—Mr. Robert H. Carpenter, New Trier H. S.

2:15–4:30 P.M.—*Symposium*—

“Communication: America’s Biggest Business” Presiding: Miss Margaret Adams, Sycamore H. S., President of IATE

“Only Hermits Don’t Communicate”—Dr. J. N. Hook, Executive Secretary of NCTE

“Bell Telephone and Communication”—John W. Drish, Employment and Educational Service Supervisor

“The Newspaper and Communication”—William Clark, Financial Editor, Chicago Tribune

“General Electric and Communication”—Everett C. Smith, Educational Specialist

6:00 P.M.—Dinner Meeting—Illini Union Ballroom

Original Ballads: Mr. Keith Clark, Ottawa Twp. H. S.

Address: Mrs. Luella B. Cook, Immediate Past President of National Council of Teachers of English

Saturday, October 12, 1957

8:30 A.M.—Registration (continued)

GENERAL SESSION

8:45–11:00 A.M.—“Some Values in Our Literary Heritage”

“The Whitman Legacy”—Dr. Charles Willard, Southern Illinois University

“Transcendental Traces in Nineteenth Century Illinois”—Dr. Ethel Seybold, Illinois College

“The Centenary of Joseph Conrad: 1857–1924—A Polish Master in English Literature”—Morton Dauwen Zabel, Professor of English, The University of Chicago

11:15–12:15 A.M.—DISCUSSION GROUPS

“Correlation of English throughout the System”

Florence V. Diers, Pekin H. S.

Grace Trigg, Proviso Twp. H. S.

(Chairman to be announced later)

“Creative Writing”

Robert G. Barker (chairman), Maine Twp. H. S., Des Plaines

Mrs. A. W. Mead, Aurora H. S.

Maud E. Weinschenk, West Rockford H. S.

“English for the Gifted Child”

Florence Cook (chairman), Shabbona H. S.

Maurine Self, Jacksonville H. S.

Cleveland Thomas, Francis W. Parker School, Chicago

“English Honors Courses”

Clarence W. Hach (chairman), Evanston Twp. H. S.

Malcolm Mosing, Evanston Twp. H. S.

Rachel Richardson, Sullivan H. S.

Dena Saaijenga, Galesburg H. S.

“High School Dramatics”

Ton De Haven, Geneseo Senior H. S.

Ralph Klein, Leyden Community H. S., Franklin Park
(Chairman to be announced later)

“Improvement of Speech through the Teaching of English”

Dr. Harris Wilson (chairman), University of Illinois

Ann Russell Janes, Jacksonville H. S.

Marion Stuart, Champaign H. S.

“Practical Approach to the Writing of Themes”

Emma Mae Leonhard (chairman), Jacksonville H. S.

Margaret Ann Cummings, Mt. Vernon H. S.

Irene Freeman, Morris H. S.

“Reading for Therapy”

Dr. John J. DeBoer (chairman), University of Illinois

Mrs. Rose L. Hewitt, Urbana H. S.

Helen K. Smith, Niles Twp. H. S., Skokie

“Specifics”

Wilmer Lamar (chairman), Decatur H. S.

Roy K. Weshinskey, Carbondale H. S.

Martha Jane Jones, Elgin H. S.

“Teaching the Ballad”

Keith Clark, Ottawa Twp. H. S.

“Writing Journalistically”

Dr. Francis W. Palmer (chairman), Eastern Illinois State
College, Charleston

Eleanor M. Johnson, Kewanee H. S.

Alice Rape, Austin H. S., Chicago

12:30 P.M.—Luncheon Meeting, Illini Union: Room 314

Address: Mrs. Luella B. Cook

